



**KITO J. BESS**

CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER

## UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

EASTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA  
PROBATION OFFICE

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**PAUL P. POBLETE**  
DEPUTY CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER

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DEPUTY CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER

**Position Title:** Sentencing Guideline Specialist

**Location of Position:** New Orleans, Louisiana

**Vacancy Announcement Number:** 16-PRB-07

**Announcement Date:** Tuesday, March 22, 2016

**Closing Date:** Friday, April 22, 2016

**Starting Salary/Classification Level:** \$67,537 - \$109,801 (CL -29) (Depending on experience)

**Anticipated Starting Date:** To Be Determined

The United States Probation Office, for the Eastern District of Louisiana, is seeking to fill the position of Sentencing Guideline Specialist. The incumbent will be assigned to perform work in presentence investigations, which involves complex completion and review of presentence investigation reports, along with assist the supervisor when absent and/or feasible; however, the probation office reserves the right to transfer and/or reclassify this position based on future agency needs. More than one position may be filed from this vacancy. **Applicants who applied under vacancy announcement #16-PRB-01 will be considered and, thus, need not re-apply. However, the applicant is required to submit a letter expressing their continued interest.**

The U. S. Probation Office, for the Eastern District of Louisiana, is a combined district which encompasses 13 parishes, 12 Active Article III Judges, 2 (Active) Senior Judges, and 5 Magistrate Judges. The headquarters office is located in New Orleans, Louisiana. The U. S. Probation Office employs more than 50 staff in a total of three locations.

### Position Overview

The Sentencing Guideline Specialist reports directly to a Supervisory U. S. Probation Officer. The incumbent will be expected to perform a full-range of high-level functional and supervisory, in the absence of the supervisor, work which encompasses the investigation of offenders and/or defendants. The Sentencing Guideline Specialist may guide the work of lower level hazardous and non-hazardous duty staff. Further, the Sentencing Guideline Specialist will assist the probation office in its continued efforts of creating an outcome based learning organization that taps human potential through dialogue, accountability, innovative ideas, and personal and professional growth.

The Sentencing Guideline Specialist is considered hazardous duty, which may require irregular working hours, to include nights, weekends, and holidays. The incumbent may be expected to frequently travel to divisional offices.

### Representative Duties:

The incumbent is expected to perform the following:

- Conduct investigations, prepare reports, and make recommendations for the court in general, high-risk, and/or specialized cases by interviewing offenders/defendants and their families and collecting background data from various sources. An integral part of this process is the interpretation and application of policies and procedures, statutes, *Federal Rules of Criminal Procedures*, and may include *U.S. Sentencing Guidelines*, Monographs, and relevant case law in the area of specialization. Track legal developments, and update staff and the Court.
- Serve as district authority on sentencing and sentencing guidelines issues. Maintain current knowledge of case law, and Sentencing Commission, Administrative Office and local policies and procedures pertaining to sentencing.
- Maintain up-to-date district-wide resource materials relating to the sentencing process.
- Train, or assist in training, district staff, law enforcement agencies, U.S. Attorney's staff, and/or defense attorneys on sentencing guidelines and sentencing matters, including new developments in sentencing issues, guideline amendments, case law, etc.
- Serve as the lead with district presentence groups by conducting regularly scheduled meetings. Serve as the group's representative to management and address any group issues of concern during management meetings.
- Complete presentence investigations involving extremely complex issues and/or cases of unusual notoriety (e.g., white collar, organized crime, large conspiracy drug cases, and criminal organizations). SUSPO's review and determine which cases meet the criteria to be assigned to the Sentencing Guidelines Specialist.
- Conduct the investigation on the lead and/or the "most culpable" defendant in multi-defendant cases and coordinate the preparation of the offense conduct section of the presentence reports in applicable cases. Coordinate the preparation of the victim impact portion of the presentence report in multi-defendant cases, when assigned lead responsibilities in such cases.
- Schedule and conduct drug use detection tests of offenders. Maintain paper and computerized records of test results. Maintain chain of custody of urinalysis testing materials. Respond to judicial officers' requests for information and advice. Testify in court as to the basis for factual findings and guideline applications, as warranted. Serve as a resource to the court and/or other agencies, i.e., United States Pretrial Services. Maintain detailed written records of case activity, i.e., offender collateral contacts, etc. Record data electronically, via PACTS or other available database.
- Conducts criminal record checks of offenders via ATLAS, NCIC, and/or other local state databases for preparation of investigations. Travel to local courts to obtain certified/noncertified records and/or police reports.
- Serve as expert in the use of Westlaw and Lexis and act as trainer for district staff in research procedures. Serve as district representative/liaison with Westlaw and Lexis.

- Serve as a consultant to presentence officers as problems arise during the course of an investigation and/or during preparation of a presentence report, in the absence of, or at the request of a SUSPO. Use Monograph 107, in accordance with the *Guide to Judiciary Policy*.
- Demonstrate and maintain proficiency in financial investigation techniques and assist other officers with these matters, as requested. Maintain resource materials for the district relating to financial investigations. Train district staff on financial matters, using Monograph 114, in accordance with the *Guide to Judiciary Policy*.
- Serve as resource to SUSPOs by reviewing presentence reports and/or sentencing litany prepared by officers, and make appropriate recommendations for addressing any performance review concerns.
- Update policy and procedures related to the investigation and preparation of presentence reports and provide related training to staff at least annually.
- Supervise/manage a caseload of probation offenders. Enforce court-ordered supervision components and implement supervision strategies. Maintain personal contact with offenders through office and community contacts and by telephone. Investigate employment, sources of income, lifestyle, and associates to assess risks and compliance. Address substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence, and similar problems and implement the necessary treatment or violation proceedings.
- Communicate with other organizations and persons (such as the U.S. Parole Commission, Bureau of Prisons, law enforcement, treatment agencies, and attorneys) concerning offenders' behavior and conditions of supervision. Identify and investigate violations and implement appropriate alternatives and sanctions. Report violations of conditions of supervision to the appropriate authorities. Prepare written reports of violation matters, and make recommendations for disposition. Testify at court or parole hearings.
- Participate in the administrative planning of specialized caseloads. Provide advice, consultation, and program vision and direction and make proposals to the Chief.
- Completes other duties as assigned or reassignment to other specialist programs based on the needs of the District.

#### Qualifications – Experience & Education:

To qualify for the position of the Sentencing Guideline Specialist, applicants must be a U. S. citizen and possess a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in a related field of study. **A minimum of three years specialized experience is required, with at least one year at a CL-28 probation/pretrial services officer in the U.S. Courts.**

#### Specialized Experience

Progressively responsible experience and/or knowledge in the pretrial services', presentence investigations, and post-conviction supervision. Specialized experience must be earned after the bachelor's degree has been granted.

Note: Experience as a police officer, FBI agent, customs officer, U. S. Marshal or similar positions, other than any criminal investigative experience, does not meet the requirements of specialized experience.

### Education Substitutions

Completion of one academic year (30 semester or 45 quarter hours) of graduate study in one of the social sciences may be substituted for one year of specialized experience; or completion of a master's degree or two years of graduate study (60 semester or 90 quarter hours) in an accredited university in one of the social sciences or a Juris Doctor (JD) degree may be substituted for two years of the specialized experience.

### Personal Characteristics and Skills (i.e., Preferred Skills)

The Eastern District of Louisiana strives to maintain and grow a productive, progressive, and positive culture. We recruit and retain staff that promote, reflect, and thrive in that environment. Successful candidates must be leaders and motivators; must be mature and highly organized; must possess tact, good judgment, poise and initiative; and must maintain a professional appearance and demeanor at all times. A successful candidate will possess the following qualities: optimistic, introspective, honest, helpful, curious, adaptable, committed, and be accountable.

The ideal candidate will also:

- Have a record of displaying good judgment and of being a proven problem-solver who can provide innovative solutions to workplace problems as well as employee relation issues;
- Be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the Charter for Excellence and will exemplify such in their day-to-day behavior;
- Be knowledgeable about national initiatives impacting our overall probation system.
- Have some knowledge of evidence-based practices and skilled in their application. A good understanding of program and service policies and procedures is essential to support decisions and to exercise good judgment. Must be a perennial learner with the desire to be an expert in our changing field.
- Be skilled in communicating effectively; both orally and in writing, with individuals and groups to provide information, facilitate meetings, and influence decision-makers and strive for high level achievement.
- Have the ability to organize, oversee, and complete multiple projects simultaneously with limited supervision.
- Demonstrate leadership by showing initiative to engaging in project management and establishing programs which helps to achieve an organization's mission and vision.
- Demonstrate how he or she continues to use technology to improve a process within their respective discipline of the probation office.

### **Additional Information:**

- The aforementioned position is classified as law enforcement. As a condition of employment, incumbents will be subject to ongoing random and reasonable suspicion drug screenings, updated background investigations every five years and, as deemed necessary by management for reasonable cause, may be subject to subsequent fitness-for-duty evaluations. At the Chief Probation Officer's discretion, the most recent reinvestigation report completed on behalf of the applicant may be requested.
- If not already completed, selected candidates must make every effort to continuously enroll in the Federal Judiciary's Leadership Development Program within five (5) years from the date of appointment; and completion and/or enrollment in Foundations of Management within one (1) year from the initial date of appointment.
- Qualified candidates will be evaluated to determine those who are best qualified. This determination will be based on a review of the applicant's relevant experience, education, and training. Qualified applicants, only, will be contacted for an interview. The interviews will be conducted in New Orleans, Louisiana. Applicants selected for interview will be required to travel to the designated location at their own expense. Relocation expenses may not be reimbursable. Only those applicants who are interviewed in person will receive a written response regarding their application status. If you are not contacted by our office following the closing date of this vacancy, another candidate within the recruitment field, with either more experience and/or qualifications, was selected. **Please do not call.**
- If selected for an interview, applicants will be required to submit to written examinations and panel interviews.

### **Benefits:**

Employees of the United States Probation Office are not subject to regulations of the Civil Service Commission. However, under the Judicial System they are entitled to the same benefits as other federal government employees. Some of the benefits are:

- During the first three years of full-time employment, employees receive 13 days of paid vacation. Thereafter, between 20-26 days of paid vacation depending upon the length of federal service.
- Employees receive 13 days of paid sick leave (unlimited accumulation) and ten (10) paid federal holidays a year.
- Subsidized medical coverage with pre-tax employee premiums and flexible benefits program for health care, dependent care and commuter/parking expenses.
- Eligibility for Group Life Insurance, Long Term Disability, and Long Term Care coverage.
- Mandatory participation in the Federal Employees Retirement System with employer matching contributions.
- Employees are required to use Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) for payroll direct deposit.
- Promotions are at the discretion of the court based upon job classification, experience and performance.

- When computing employee leave and retirement benefits, time in service with other federal agencies, as well as time for prior military service, is taken into consideration.

**How to Apply:**

Interested candidates should submit a complete applicant's packet by **5:00 PM, Friday, April 22, 2016**, which includes:

- A letter of interest which includes a detailed narrative statement addressing specific qualifications and relevant experience that outlines your personal characteristics and management philosophy. The letter should be no more than three pages, single space;
- Listing of three professional references;
- Judicial Branch Application for Employment form (i.e., AO 78); and
- Kindly attach a resume and copies of the last two performance appraisals.

Applicants selected for final interviews will be required to prepare and make a presentation, not to exceed 10 minutes on the following:

- *In the book **Becoming an Effective Leader**, "the best leaders exert their influence most effectively by creating a work climate that encourages people to serve the organization, rather than seeking to acquire power for their own aggrandizement. They see themselves as having a duty to others rather than others having a duty to them" (2005, p. 9). Please articulate, via your presentation, how you plan to encourage team members to serve the organization for greater productivity, in the midst of less resources'. It is strongly encouraged that you reflect on at least two instances where you have achieved such in your present position and cite why this is essential to the advancement of the organization.*

The AO-078 application form can be downloaded from:

[http://www.laep.uscourts.gov/sites/laep/files/AO\\_078\\_Application\\_for\\_Employment.pdf](http://www.laep.uscourts.gov/sites/laep/files/AO_078_Application_for_Employment.pdf)

**YOU MUST REFERENCE THE VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT NUMBER IN YOUR LETTER OF INTEREST.** Applications will not be considered complete until all of the items listed above have been received by Human Resources. No application material, with the exception of academic transcripts, will be accepted via U. S. Mail. All application material must be submitted **ELECTRONICALLY**, no exceptions.

Please email your complete applicant's packet to: [vacancies@laep.uscourts.gov](mailto:vacancies@laep.uscourts.gov)

Attachments must be saved as **one** PDF file – Multiple attachments **WILL NOT** be accepted



**Disclosures:**

The United States Probation Office reserves the right to modify the conditions of this vacancy announcement, and/or fill multiple positions from this vacancy announcement, to withdraw the announcement, or to fill the position sooner than the closing date without prior written notice. The United States Probation Office requires employees to adhere to a Code of Conduct for Judiciary Employees. The Probation Office will not reimburse candidates for travel in connection with the interview or pay for any relocation expenses. Only those interviewed will be notified of the selection outcome. We appreciate your interest in employment with our district.

*The United States Probation Office for the Eastern District of Louisiana is an Equal Opportunity Employer*

The graphic features a dark blue background. At the top, the text "UNITED STATES PROBATION OFFICE" is in gold. Below it, on the left, is a bald eagle's head in front of a waving American flag. To the right of the eagle, the text "Eastern District of Louisiana" is in white. Further right is an open wooden treasure chest with a bright light emanating from it. Below these elements, the text "Our Vision" is in gold, followed by "The Eastern District of Louisiana is a district where:" in white. This is followed by a list of vision statements in white: "Community safety is enhanced through facilitating effective positive change of individuals under supervision", "Integrity, impartiality and fairness are fundamental", "Inspiration and Collaboration foster positive innovation", "Each individual is unique and has opinions, values and experiences that are respected", and "We strive to exceed expectations". Below this list, "Our Guiding Principles" is in gold, followed by a list of principles in white: "We model positive behavior, leadership and teamwork", "We value new ideas and encourage feedback", "We are focused on measurable outcomes", "We treat everyone with dignity, respect and fairness", "We are committed to servicing the court, community and each other", and "We take a proactive role in the implementation of positive change". At the bottom, the phrase "Unlocking Potential" is in large gold letters, flanked by two gold keys.

UNITED STATES PROBATION OFFICE

Eastern District  
of Louisiana

Our Vision

The Eastern District of Louisiana is a district where:

- Community safety is enhanced through facilitating effective positive change of individuals under supervision
- Integrity, impartiality and fairness are fundamental
- Inspiration and Collaboration foster positive innovation
- Each individual is unique and has opinions, values and experiences that are respected
- We strive to exceed expectations

Our Guiding Principles

- We model positive behavior, leadership and teamwork
- We value new ideas and encourage feedback
- We are focused on measurable outcomes
- We treat everyone with dignity, respect and fairness
- We are committed to servicing the court, community and each other
- We take a proactive role in the implementation of positive change

Unlocking Potential